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General Assembly

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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2010
30 August-3 September 2010

Agenda and programme of work for 2010

The agenda for the substantive session of 2010 of the Committee on Conferences was approved by the Committee at its organizational session, on 30 March 2010, on the basis of a draft agenda proposed by the Secretariat in the annex to document A/AC.172/2010/L.1. The approved agenda for the substantive session of 2010 is accordingly issued in the present document. In accordance with section F of the annex to General Assembly resolution 58/316, all matters pertaining to conference management and regularly reported under the agenda item "Pattern of conferences" will be included in one comprehensive report. The draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2011 will be issued as a separate document.

At its organizational session, the Committee on Conferences also adopted the dates for its substantive session, to be held from 30 August to 3 September 2010. The programme of work of the Committee will follow the same pattern as in previous years: the Committee will meet formally on 30 August, 1 and 3 September, leaving 31 August and 2 September for informal consultations and for the processing of the draft report. As usual, a videoconference will be scheduled during the substantive session, with the participation of conference management officials in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the theme of which will be announced at a later date.

Agenda for the substantive session of 2010

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Calendar of conferences and meetings:
   (a) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243;
   (b) Adoption of the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings for 2011 and related matters;
   (c) Intersessional departures for 2010 and related matters.

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3. Meetings management:

   (a) Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities:

      (i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of conference-servicing resources;

      (ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required";

      (iii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;

      (iv) Utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi;

      (v) Utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa;

   (b) Impact of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach), on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation.

4. Integrated global management.

5. Documentation and publication-related matters.

6. Translation and interpretation-related matters.

7. Organization of work.

8. Adoption of the report.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings

(a) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243

In paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/202 A, the General Assembly demanded that all subsidiary organs of the Assembly comply with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, in which it had decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In accordance with the procedure established by the Committee at its 1986 session and reaffirmed at its 1992 session, chairs of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that wish to meet at Headquarters during the main part of the Assembly should submit their requests to the Chair of the Committee for consideration.

Documentation: Letter from the Chair of the Committee on Conferences to the President of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly (A/65/__).

(b) Adoption of the draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings for 2011 and related matters

In section I, paragraph 2, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly approved the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2010 and 2011, as submitted by the Committee on Conferences, taking into account the observations of the Committee and subject to the provisions of the resolution, and, in paragraph 4 of the same section, authorized the Committee on Conferences to make any adjustments to the calendar of conferences and meetings for 2010 and 2011 that might become necessary as a result of actions and decisions taken by the Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

Documentation: Draft revised calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations for 2011 (A/AC.172/2010/L.2).

In paragraph 3 of the same section, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine the feasibility and implications of all options and proposals to adjust the calendar of conferences and meetings aimed at addressing the problem of timely availability and consideration of documentation for the Fifth Committee and to report thereon at its sixty-fifth session through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(c) Intersessional departures for 2010 and related matters

A compilation of requests for intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and meetings for 2010, together with the action taken by the Committee, will be provided for inclusion in the report of the Committee.

3. Meetings management

(a) Utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

(i) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of conference-servicing resources

In section II.A, paragraph 3, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly welcomed the steps taken by those bodies that had adjusted their programmes of work in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources, and requested the Committee on Conferences to continue consultations with the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilized their conference-servicing resources.

Statistical data and analysis of the planned and actual utilization of conference-servicing resources allocated to a core sample of bodies will be included in the report of the Secretary-General. The Chair will report orally on consultations with bodies that have underutilized their conference-servicing resources.

(ii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of bodies entitled to meet "as required"

In section II.A, paragraph 5, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly noted that the percentage of meetings held by the bodies entitled to meet "as required" that were provided with interpretation services in New York in 2008 was 90 per cent, as compared with 88 per cent in 2007, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report on the provision of conference services to those bodies through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(iii) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In section II.A, paragraph 6, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly recognized the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States were met and to inform the requestors as early as possible about the availability of conference services, including interpretation, as well as about any changes that might occur before the meeting. In paragraph 7 of the same section, the Assembly regretted that the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States that were provided with interpretation services at the four main duty stations was 77 per cent in 2008 as compared with 84 per cent in 2007, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to employ innovative means to address the difficulties experienced by Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(iv) Utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

In section II.A, paragraph 9, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with several Assembly resolutions, including resolution 63/248, section II.A, paragraph 9, in conformity with the headquarters rule, all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies had been held in Nairobi in 2008, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(v) Utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

In section II.A, paragraph 10, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly noted with appreciation ongoing promotional efforts and initiatives undertaken by the management of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, which had led to a continued upward trend in utilization of the premises in 2008. In paragraph 11 of the same section, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore means to increase the utilization of the conference centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, bearing in mind the headquarters minimum operating security standards, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

(b) Impact of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach), on meetings held at Headquarters during its implementation

In section II.B, paragraph 3, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to keep the matter under constant review, and requested the Secretary-General to report regularly to the Committee on matters pertaining to the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations during the construction period.

In section II.B, paragraph 4, of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide adequate information technology support for conference services, within the existing resources of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in order to ensure their seamless operation throughout the implementation of the capital master plan. In paragraph 6 of the same section, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to consult Member States on initiatives that affected the utilization of conference services and conference facilities.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

4. Integrated global management

In section III, paragraph 5, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly reiterated the need for the Secretary-General to ensure the compatibility of technologies used in all duty stations and to ensure that they are user-friendly in all official languages; and in paragraph 6 of the same section, it requested the Secretary-General to complete the task of uploading all important older United Nations documents onto the United Nations website in all six official languages on a priority basis, so as to ensure that these archives are also available to Member States through that medium.

In section III, paragraph 8, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to ensure that measures taken by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, as a key performance indicator of the Department, provide equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and were in full compliance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, through the Committee on Conferences, on progress made in that regard. In paragraph 9 of the same section, the Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore best practices and techniques in client satisfaction evaluations and to report on a regular basis to the General Assembly on the results achieved.

In section III, paragraph 10, of the same resolution, the General Assembly welcomed the efforts made by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to systematically capture and analyse feedback from Member States and committee chairs and secretaries on the quality of conference services and to report thereon to the General Assembly through the Committee on Conferences. In paragraph 11 of the same section, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly apprised of progress made in integrated global management.

In section III, paragraph 12, of the same resolution, the General Assembly noted with concern that the Secretary-General had not included in his report on the pattern of conferences information about the financial savings achieved through implementation of the integrated global management projects as requested in section III, paragraph 4, of its resolution 63/248, and requested the Secretary-General to redouble his efforts to include that information in his next report on the pattern of conferences. In paragraph 13 of the same section, the Assembly took note of the recommendations provided by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in its report (A/64/166) and requested the Secretary-General to ensure their full implementation and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session through the Committee on Conferences.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

In paragraph 67 of its resolution 64/243, the General Assembly stressed the need for programme managers, and duty stations resourced through section 2 of the programme budget, to be cost-effective and efficient in the use of services from the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, in particular with respect to the effective functioning of the global management of conference services and requested the Secretary-General to develop mechanisms that would enhance accountability in that regard.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

5. Documentation and publication-related matters

In section IV, paragraph 1, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly decided that all the reports adopted by the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council at its fourth and fifth sessions and the additional

information submitted by the States under review before the adoption of the outcome by the Council would be issued as documents in all official languages of the United Nations, and requested the Secretary-General to undertake the necessary measures to that effect. In paragraph 2 of the same section, the Assembly also decided that all reports adopted by the Working Group would be issued as documents in all official languages of the United Nations in a timely manner before their consideration by the Council, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 36/117 A of 10 December 1981, 51/211 A to E, 52/214, 53/208 A to E and 59/265, and requested the Secretary-General to ensure the necessary support to that effect.

In section IV, paragraph 13, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly expressed its deep concern at the unprecedented high level of late submission of documentation, which, in turn, had a negative impact on the functioning of intergovernmental bodies, and urged author departments to fully adhere to deadlines in meeting the goal of 90 per cent submission compliance.

In section IV, paragraph 4, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly reiterated the importance of the timely issuance of documents for the Fifth Committee. In paragraph 11 of the same section, the Assembly recognized the work done by the task force chaired by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management in positively addressing the problem of issuance of documents for the Fifth Committee and, in paragraph 12, it welcomed the continued efforts of the task force to shepherd the submissions of documents by the author departments of the Secretariat. Furthermore, in paragraph 15 of the same section, the Assembly acknowledged that a multipronged approach was required to find a solution to the perennial difficulties of the late issuance of documents for the Fifth Committee and, in paragraph 16, it encouraged the Chairs of the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions to promote cooperation between the two bodies in the sphere of documentation.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

In paragraph 26 (recommendation 2) of its report on the audit of conference services put at the disposal of the Human Rights Council in 2009 (A/64/511), the Office of Internal Oversight Services recommended that the Division of Conference Management, in consultation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, develop a strategy to include the optimal permanent staffing levels required to provide acceptable standards of service. The strategy should take into account the capacity of the Department as a whole, including an assessment of any shortfalls in capacity or excess capacity at other duty stations, such as Nairobi, Vienna and New York, and the use of computer-assisted translation.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

In paragraph 30 (recommendation 4) of the same report, the Office of Internal Oversight Services recommended that the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management prepare a document for consideration by the General Assembly consolidating existing guidelines on word and page limits and clarifying the number of words per page and pages per document for reports, including all documents submitted by the Secretariat directly and on behalf of intergovernmental bodies.

Documentation: The Secretariat will include the document as an annex to the report.

6. Translation and interpretation-related matters

In section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to seek evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them, including through the language-specific informational meetings held twice a year, and to ensure that such measures provided equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluations in the six official languages of the United Nations and were in full compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

In section V, paragraph 5, of its resolution 64/230, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the measures taken by the Secretariat to fill current and future vacancies at the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the information contained in paragraphs 87 to 89 of the report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/64/136), and requested the Secretary-General to consider further measures aimed at decreasing the vacancy rates in Nairobi and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

In section V, paragraph 6, of the same resolution, the General Assembly acknowledged the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General, in accordance with its resolutions, to address the issue of the replacement of retiring staff in the language services, and requested the Secretary-General to maintain and intensify those efforts, including the strengthening of cooperation with institutions that train language specialists to meet the need in the six official languages of the United Nations.

In section V, paragraph 7, of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to hold competitive examinations for the recruitment of language staff sufficiently in advance in order to fill current and future vacancies in language services in a timely manner, and to inform the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session of efforts in that regard.

In section V, paragraph 8, of the same resolution, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to continue to improve the accuracy of translation of documents into the six official languages, giving particular significance to the quality of translation. In paragraph 9 of the same section, it further requested the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to enhance translation quality in all six official languages, in particular for contractual translation, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session.

In section V, paragraph 10, of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide, at all duty stations, adequate staff at the appropriate level, with a view to ensuring appropriate quality control for external translation, with due consideration of the principle of equal grade for equal work.

In section V, paragraph 11, of the resolution, the General Assembly took note of the information on the impact of freelance recruitment on the quality of interpretation at all duty stations contained in paragraphs 81 to 86 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/136), and requested the Secretary-General to report on the issue to the Assembly at its sixty-fifth session through the Committee on Conferences.

In section V, paragraph 12, of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixty-fifth session on the experience, lessons learned and best practices of the main duty stations in performing quality control of

contractual translations, including on requirements relating to the number and appropriate level of the staff needed to carry out that function.

The Secretariat will report on the matter.

7. Organization of work

In section II.A, paragraph 20, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Committee on Conferences to keep under continued review the procedures for the participation of observers in the work of the Committee.

8. Adoption of the report